

Andrew Jackson to Thomas Jefferson, February 6, 1822, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.1

1 Copy.

Hermitage, February 6, 1822.

D'r Sir. While Doctr. Thos. G. Watkins resided in this state, there was a considerable difference between him and myself—which I am informed has operated much to the Docts prejudice.

He called on me yesterday at my house for the purpose of reconcilliation. He made such explanations as has induced me to restore him to the standing he occupied in my estimation before the unpleasant difference took place. At his request it affords me pleasure to make this communication. I am happy to learn from the Doctr that you continue to enjoy good health in your old age.

That your health and life may long be preserved for the benefit of society and the litterary world is the fervent wish of your friend and obt. sert2

2 Jackson wrote this letter at the request of John Somerville, of Nashville, who informed him, Feb. 4, 1822, that Dr. Watkins's enemies had revived an old story, to the doctor's prejudice, with respect to Mrs. Polly Davis's will, and appealed to him to grant an interview to Dr. Watkins so as to give him an opportunity to re-establish himself in his, Jackson's, good opinion. Somerville, who admitted that he was once an enemy of Dr. Watkins, concluded his letter as follows:

Library of Congress

“He now resides near Mr. Jefferson, whose family Physician he is when at home, and where your name will do him either much good or much harm. There his enemies have against set the story of Mrs. Davis's Will in agitation against him for the purpose, no doubt, of distroying his popularity as a Physician of the first grade of talents. Allow me then, to solicit you most earnestly to save a worthy and deserving man, who has been most falsely traduced, by giving him the hand of friendship and of reconciliation with such letters to your friends Mr. Jefferson and Mr Madison as your feelings will dictate as proper on the occasion. As I have the strongest reasons to beli[e]ve that this reconciliation is not sought through motives of pecuniary interest in his profession, I can assure you that it is desired to give peace to his wounded feelings and increase his pleasure in life by being restored to the good opinion of one whose estimation he has ever valued very highly and whose public services had endeared him to the hearts and warmest affections of the American People.”

Jefferson's opinions of Jackson's fitness for the Presidency are usually pronounced unfavorable, and the evidence cited is a statement of Webster's (see Webster's *Correspondence*, I. 371). But, Nov. 2, 1827, Dr. Thomas G. Watkins wrote to a Washington editor, probably Duff Green, saying that, in a communication, which he was about to publish in the Knoxville *Register*, he had summed up what he had often heard Jefferson say of Jackson, Adams, and Clay, and Jefferson's opinion of Jackson was high.